

NOT THE PASSOVER.

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I have been much interested in the long series of contributions to the EVANGELIST on the Passover question, but this is, no doubt, in part due to the fact that I had myself made an exhaustive study of the subject and was thus prepared to digest the arguments as presented by the different writers, so I will not take issue with our Editor when he says that the talents of the contributors might have been better employed.

Brother Brown presents the idea in a novel form but I fail to perceive that the idea itself differs materially from that held by the others who claim that Jesus intended, in this supper, to observe the Passover. For myself I prefer the *singular* to the *dual* idea for this reason, that so long as the idea of Passover is continued in it the true idea of the commemoration of Christ's suffering and death is weakened. It is as if Christ had said, "We this night observe the Passover of the Jews, but, from henceforth, when you celebrate the Passover, remember me." It would be the Passover still and remembrance of Jesus would be a secondary matter.

In former years it was necessary for one taking the negative of this question to explain the Roman method of counting time and many other points connected with the last supper in order to make an argument, but so far as I now remember, no one of the late contributors have maintained that this meal was at the proper time for the Jewish Passover. On the contrary, these points have been very fully presented by the opposition, so it seems to me that it would be very unwise in me to fill your columns with a repetition of them.

It was formerly held that John's account referred to a different feast from that mentioned in the other narratives, but there were so many incidents in common that this position has become to be acknowledged untenable, but in avoiding this Scylla they are near being wrecked on a Charybdis on the other side in this, that there is no precedent for observing the Jewish Passover before the proper time. Certain persons who could not possibly celebrate the feast at the proper time had been permitted to observe it thirty days later, but we have no record of any one asking to observe the feast before the time, from the fact that he might not be able to observe it when he came.

It may be argued that Jesus had power to make a new precedent or to act without precedent, and this is true, but *would* he? He says "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be

fulfilled." "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil."

A false interpretation of the language of Jesus has led some to take the position last referred to, and this interpretation is the only point on which I join issue with them. One contributor goes to the trouble to insert a parenthetical explanation as follows: (Correct translation.) Since a large body of the best Greek scholars in the United States and Great Britain has decided that the language quoted is *not* correct, we are at a loss to comprehend the writer's standard of interpretation. I have no sympathy with the so-called, higher criticism. I would not say one word against the sanctity of the Scriptures as Christ and his disciples gave them, but the "authority" of the "authorized version" is quite different from the inspiration of the original. Who was King James that we should venerate a translation that he has authorized? The committee of Revision had so many advantages of scholarship as well as different texts lately discovered, that we certainly err in not accepting their work as the best interpretation of the Scriptures for English readers. Of course those who are able to read the original have a right to their opinion as to the merits of a translation, but they should not, without a good reason, seek to prejudice others against an accepted English version.

The principal text to which the opposition cling is found in Luke 22:15, 16, reading in King James' version "And he said unto them, 'With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.'"

The Revised version changes this by omitting "any more" in the 16th verse so that verse would read "for I say unto you I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

From my knowledge of the Greek, after some investigation I would present the following rendition of the text which seems to me to give the idea of the original more accurately than the revision. "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; *but* I say unto you, I *may* not indeed eat of it, till it shall be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." I do not think it wise, in this communication to discuss my reasons for differing from the committee on revision, and will merely say on this point that in the 8th chapter of Luke (Luke 22) we have a similar statement in same mode and tense only differing in number and it is there translated "we may eat." So far as my argument is concerned, I do not ob-

ject to the idea of futurity as expressed by "shall," that is also expressed by "may," there is no future tense in the potential, but when "will" is used and that is read to mean the determined intention of the speaker, I object to it as being entirely foreign to the original.

I think it is not necessary for me to add more. John says this supper was before the feast of the Passover, and we now find that Luke makes Jesus say, "I will not eat it, (the Passover) until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God," and there is nothing in the other narratives that will answer these statements. Christ evidently meant on this occasion to declare to his disciples that he would not live to see the Passover feast proper, but he was not understood.

It may be, indeed, it is very probable, that what was eaten at this supper was a part of the food secured for the Passover feast, but the "lamb" was not there and with this exception and that of leaven we do not know that the Passover feast differed in the matter of food from an ordinary supper among the Jews, and since all the writers agree that Jesus at this time, established a festival that was to be observed by his followers by eating a meal together, we fail to see why a very little charity would not suffice to cover up the whole difference on this question. Even if some should claim that it was eminently proper to celebrate the feast about the Passover season I could agree with him, but if another would say that it was good at other times, I could not differ with him. Though Brother Bowman presents some views with which I cannot agree I can accept his conclusions in full and so I am willing to accept them as my own and so will not prepare any for this article, trusting that the Editor in his promised review will emphasize any point I may have made.

I have not written for the scholarly, from the fact that I was afraid it would not be instructive to the general reader but if any one wishes to know further of my reasons for differing with the revisers I shall be pleased to correspond with him.

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I WILL place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of Christ. If anything I have will advance the interests of that kingdom, it shall be given or kept, as by giving or keeping it shall most promote the glory of him to whom I owe all my hopes, both for time and eternity. May grace be given me to adhere to this.—
David Livingstone.